

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application or previous response to office action:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of validating a network, the method comprising:

receiving user input requesting a validation process to validate a network, the network including a plurality of devices;

in response to the user input, automatically testing an interconnection among the plurality of devices in the network;

if the tested interconnection is inactive, generating a message that identifies the inactive interconnection;

in response to the user input, automatically testing whether the network conforms to one or more hardware interconnect rules;

if the network fails to conform to the one or more hardware interconnect rules, generating a message that identifies the one or more failed hardware interconnect rules;

in response to the user input, automatically communicating with one or more of the devices in the network and discovering attributes of the one or more devices;

if one of the one or more devices is inactive, recording a device access failure for the inactive device;

determining whether the one or more devices are compatible to operate with each other by automatically comparing the discovered attributes with a predefined set of valid device attributes, the predefined set of valid device attributes specifying device attributes that are compatible with one another;

generating output data that indicates whether the discovered attributes match the valid device attributes; and

generating output data that identifies an invalid attribute among the discovered attributes and a corresponding valid attribute from the predefined set of valid device attributes.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein:

the predefined set of valid device attributes specifies valid software versions;

the operation of automatically discovering attributes of the devices comprises automatically discovering version information for software in one or more of the devices; and

the operation of automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes comprises automatically comparing the discovered version information with the valid software versions.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 3, wherein:

the software in at least one of the one or more devices comprises firmware; and

the operation of automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes comprises automatically determining whether the firmware has a valid version.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the operation of automatically discovering attributes of the devices comprises:

automatically identifying a device type for at least one of the devices;

dynamically loading a validation module based on the identified device type; and

automatically using the validation module to poll the at least one device.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

automatically determining the valid device attributes by reference to a file that uses a markup language to encode the valid device attributes.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6, wherein:

the file with the valid device attributes comprises an extensible markup language (XML) file; and

the operation of automatically determining the valid device attributes comprises parsing the XML file by reference to a document type definition (DTD) file, wherein the DTD file contains definitions of data elements for validating the network.

8. (Currently Amended) A program product for validating devices in a network, the program product comprising:

a tangible computer-readable medium; and

computer instructions encoded in the tangible computer-readable medium, wherein, when executed, the computer instructions perform operations comprising:

receiving user input requesting a validation process to validate a network, the network including a plurality of devices;

in response to the user input, automatically testing an interconnection among the plurality of devices in the network;

if the tested interconnection is inactive, generating a message that identifies the inactive interconnection;

in response to the user input, automatically testing whether the network conforms to one or more hardware interconnect rules;

if the network fails to conform to the one or more hardware interconnect rules, generating a message that identifies the one or more failed hardware interconnect rules;

in response to the user input, automatically communicating with one or more of the devices in the network and discovering attributes of the one or more devices;

if one of the one or more devices is inactive, recording a device access failure for the inactive device;

determining whether the one or more devices are compatible to operate with each other by automatically comparing the discovered attributes with a predefined set of valid device attributes, the predefined set of valid device attributes specifying device attributes that are compatible with each other;

generating output data that indicates whether the discovered attributes match the valid device attributes; and

generating output data that identifies an invalid attribute among the discovered attributes and a corresponding valid attribute from the predefined set of valid device attributes.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) The program product of Claim 8, wherein:

the predefined set of valid device attributes specifies valid software versions;

the operation of automatically discovering attributes of the devices comprises automatically discovering version information for software in one or more of the devices; and

the operation of automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes comprises automatically comparing the discovered version information with the valid software versions.

11. (Original) The program product of Claim 10, wherein:

the software in at least one of the one or more devices comprises firmware; and

the operation of automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes comprises automatically determining whether the firmware has a valid version.

12. (Original) The program product of Claim 8, wherein the operation of automatically discovering attributes of the devices comprises:

automatically identifying a device type for at least one of the devices;

dynamically loading a validation module based on the identified device type; and

automatically using the validation module to poll the at least one device.

13. (Original) The program product of Claim 8, wherein the computer instructions perform further operations comprising:

automatically determining the valid device attributes by reference to a file that uses a markup language to encode the valid device attributes.

14. **(Currently Amended)** An information handling system for validating a network configuration, the information handling system comprising:

a tangible computer-usuable medium;

a predefined set of valid device attributes stored in the tangible computer-usuable medium;

a network interface in communication with a network of devices; and

processing resources in communication with the network interface and the computer-usuable medium, wherein the processing resources perform operations comprising:

receiving user input requesting a validation process to validate a network, the network including a plurality of devices;

in response to the user input, automatically testing an interconnection among the plurality of devices in the network;

if the tested interconnection is inactive, generating a message that identifies the inactive interconnection;

in response to the user input, automatically testing whether the network conforms to one or more hardware interconnect rules;

if the network fails to conform to the one or more hardware interconnect rules, generating a message that identifies the one or more failed hardware interconnect rules;

in response to the user input, automatically communicating with one or more of the devices via the network interface to discover attributes of the one or more devices;

if one of the one or more devices is inactive, recording a device access failure for the inactive device;

determining whether the one or more devices are compatible to operate with each other by automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes, the predefined set of valid device attributes specifying device attributes that are compatible with each other;

generating output data that indicates whether the discovered attributes match the valid device attributes; and

generating output data that identifies an invalid attribute among the discovered attributes and a corresponding valid attribute from the predefined set of valid device attributes.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 14, wherein:
the predefined set of valid device attributes specifies valid software versions;
the processing resources automatically discover version information for software in one or more of the devices; and
the processing resources automatically compare the discovered version information with the valid software versions.

17. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 16, wherein the software in at least one of the one or more devices comprises firmware, and the processing resources automatically determine whether the firmware has a valid version.

18. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 14, wherein:
the processing resources automatically identify a device type for at least one of the devices;
the processing resources dynamically load a validation module based on the identified device type; and
the processing resources automatically use the validation module to poll the at least one device.

19. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 14, further comprising:

a file that uses a markup language to encode the valid device attributes, wherein the processing resources automatically determine the valid device attributes by reference to the file with the valid device attributes.

20. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 19, wherein:
 - the file with the valid device attributes comprises an extensible markup language (XML) file;
 - the information handling system further comprises a document type definition (DTD) file that contains definitions of data elements for validating the network; and
 - the processing resources automatically determine the valid device attributes by using the DTD file to parse the XML file.

21. (Original) The information handling system of Claim 14, wherein the processing resources comprise:

- one or more processors; and
- software which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the operations of receiving user input, automatically communicating with the devices, automatically comparing the discovered attributes with the predefined set of valid device attributes, and generating output data.

22. (Cancelled)